

Hegel, Taoism and Freedom

By Peter David Smith

An anarchist world would be populated by little groups of people trying to have some freedom until they are taken over and enslaved by bigger groups.

Eventually the whole world would consist of slave states owned by the organised crime families, the oligarchies, the totalitarian fascists, the totalitarian communists, the imperialist monarchists, the cult theocracies.

By abandoning democratic elections and embracing anarchy humans would lose all of their freedom.

The ancient model of the “God King” or “Pharaoh” was a society where all of the human rights belonged to the God King Pharaoh and zero human rights belonged to the common people.

Rich people make poor people.

Human rights are not an infinite resource.

If one person or some people try to have 100% human rights they can achieve that only by forcing others to have less rights.

If you had the right to trample all over your neighbour’s home that would be taking away your neighbour’s rights. Your neighbour would equally have the right to trample all over YOUR home.

Hold onto your rights by letting go of some. Respect your neighbour’s rights.

We all lose our rights by trying to be 100% rights entitled.

The only way that we can all have human rights is by respecting each other’s rights.

That means we all need to accept some rules in society. Without those rules we would have no rights at all.

Freedom in this material world of ours can be great but it cannot be 100%. There are always limits to freedom because of the need to respect each other’s freedom.

It’s like water. If one person has all of the water then the rest of us perish.

So, okay, sharing is important.

Hegel made the mistake of thinking that all of history was leading to the sort of political state in which he lived. Hegel achieved profound understanding but couldn't quite manage to see beyond the form which events and processes had taken in his own era.

Hegel's approach to understanding freedom is limited by his intellectual approach.

The intellectual approach is good as far as it goes but is too steep a hill for many people to climb. Taoism provides the simplicity which is needed for complete understanding.

There are thrilling wonders of the world spirit or nature spirit to be found in nothingness.

Behind the Ego is the intellectual attempt to understand the world. The Ego pulls from the intuitive instinct and from the counter-intuitive logic. Behind the intuitive and the counter-intuitive is the emotional flow of feeling. When we relax into that flow of feeling we get in touch with the spirit which gives life meaning and release from the destructive stresses. Behind that is the simple physical existence and the simple work of caring for yourself and others.

When we become empty and vacant we experience the depth of reality and the spirit of the world.

Ethical life is caring for nature and for the structure of society which gives us our freedom. Ethical life is respecting the rights of other humans and other lifeforms in nature.

Discipline in mind and body and emotions is good, but so is loosening up now and then. If a branch is inflexible it will break. Be loose, be supple, but be returning always to the discipline of the gentle Way.

Practice the disciplines of LOGIC and INTUITION for the mind.

Practice the disciplines of CARE and KINDNESS toward yourself and toward others.

Practice the disciplines of HARD WORK and SIMPLICITY for the energy of the body.

Be an individual. Be a personality. Be your self. Let the essence take care of itself.

Don't be a slave.

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